

## THE YEAR WAS GOOD

WHOLESALE TRADE OF RICHMOND  
BETTER THAN WAS EXPECTED.

## MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN SOME LINES

Various Houses Report Having Ex-  
tending Business Into New Terri-  
tory With Largely-Increased Sales,  
Outlook for 1898 Very Bright.

The wholesale trade of Richmond during 1897 was, upon the whole, satisfactory. In some lines this is especially true, there having been marked improvement over 1896. In others the dealers did not do so well as in years past, but in no line was there a falling off of consequence.

Merchants naturally feel that it is a great achievement to hold their own in these days, when the stringency is crowding so many to the wall, and necessitating the closest watch upon every detail, in order to avert disaster by overstepping very narrow margins. That they have all been able to do this, and that many have been able to extend their trade into new fields, with a resulting increase of sales, is naturally cause for congratulation.

Upon the whole, the expectation of better things in 1898, which seems general, is well-founded. The wholesale men and manufacturers unite with the retailers in the belief that times will be better, which is a long step towards prosperity. The outlook for 1898 is, therefore, bright, and the wholesale dealers of Richmond are unanimous to a remarkable degree in their expression of high hopes for 1898.

## THEY HAVE EXTENDED TRADE.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
We have had a fairly good year in our line of business, considering the depression which has existed all over the country. In the department of builders' hardware (which includes most of our city trade) for supplying contractors, business has not been up to the usual mark, on account of the fact that the contractors are not doing much work. We feel, however, that we have furnished our share of the goods used in this line.

In our wholesale department, by greater exertion, and taking in new territory, we have brought our sales quite up to what we anticipated.

We are hopeful that another year has in store better prospects still. With the building of the electric power plants on the river, which will give our manufacturers a new outlet for their products, and the beginning at least of the great improvements of the Chesapeake and Ohio railway, and the inauguration of the sugar-beet industry, all lines of business in the city will be benefited, some more than others. The outlook for 1898 is, therefore, bright.

A. B. CLARKE & SON,  
Hardware Dealers.

## THEIR TRADE HAS INCREASED.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
Our business has been satisfactory throughout the year. The severe drought in the fall affected some of our lines, and the low price of cotton has injured southern trade during the past two months. Still, the year as a whole shows a slight increase over 1896. The outlook for 1898 is very good; farmers have made good crops and realized better prices than for several years past. The only exception to this is cotton, the condition of the market, and the heavy demand for it, which will be of material advantage to the patrons of the Jefferson.

P. M. FRY, Manager.

## THE OUTLOOK IS BETTER.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
Our business for 1897 was not as good as it was for 1896. For the month of December our business was light for the first part, but since the 20th of the month it has been very good. The outlook for 1898 is encouraging. Yours truly,  
ANDREW WELSH,  
Agent Southern Express Company.

## IMPROVEMENT IN SHOE TRADE.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
We are glad to report an improvement over the past year, and our hopeful expectation of continued improvement for the coming year. Our own State is better off than she has been for years, in consequence of the better prices for cotton and tobacco, and the better price for southern products as a rule, prospering, notwithstanding the low price of cotton.

Allow us to say that we think our papers should take up the question of better terminal facilities for our city by the Chesapeake and Ohio and Southern railroads. The present shanties have become a depot ever since the war, and would be a disgrace to a country village. WINGO, ELLIOTT & CRUMP,  
Shoes.

## WAY PAVED FOR PROSPERITY.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
The business conditions through a country of 1897 were favorable, and every indication pointed to an exceedingly prosperous year's work, but the dread yellow-fever, making its appearance just at the beginning of the year, the great season in the fall, and the great depression of the cotton served to depress the business in a large part of the South for several months of the year, and we have not yet recovered from the effects of it.

## TRADE CONSIDERABLY INCREASED.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
Our piano, organ, and musical merchandise sales for 1897 show a considerable increase over 1896, which, in turn, exceeds the preceding year. There has been a steady and healthy growth in our line since the panic year 1893, when all commercial enterprises suffered alike. The piano and organ accomplishment is now recognized as an essential part of the education of one's family, and owing to the easy installment feature, the piano finds a home in the humblest parlor. Here the first steps are taken, and the child is promised to be a "billionaire," as judged by the reports of our traveling men and other indications of a local character. In our opinion the greatest benefit to music and business generally is a more liberal and country bank currency in the hands of the planter and farmer with facilities which would enable them to pursue their operations with economy on a business footing.

WALTER D. MOSES & CO.,  
Dealers in Oils.

## FAR BETTER THAN EXPECTED.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
We are happy to say that our business for the past year has been very good, and is now holding up far better than we have any reason to expect. We have every reason to believe from present indications that our business for 1898 will surpass any previous year.

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## THE BUILDING OUTLOOK BRIGHTER.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
The past year has been characterized by great stagnation in all building operations, and as these operations are the first to feel the general depression in business affairs, and are the last to recuperate, the building interest is still dull and far below the normal level. There is, however, some indication of a late recovery. The movement, principally consisting of alterations and additions to old buildings, and the outlook is for greater improvement and activity. There are many vacant houses in the city, but this is due to the fact that the people are not able to pay the rent, and the houses are being sold at a loss. The building interest is still dull and far below the normal level. There is, however, some indication of a late recovery. The movement, principally consisting of alterations and additions to old buildings, and the outlook is for greater improvement and activity. There are many vacant houses in the city, but this is due to the fact that the people are not able to pay the rent, and the houses are being sold at a loss.

## SAYS THE DISPATCH DID IT.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
Our business for 1897 has surpassed our expectations. In regard to the outlook for spring, must say things never looked brighter in our line.

## PROSPECTS VERY BRIGHT.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
The glue trade for 1897 was not very

active, on account of decline in manufacturing in nearly all lines using glue, and overstock on cheaper grades. Of fine glues there is a very small supply on hand.

The photograph trade has been very much cut up among the professionals, and prices are very low. The amateur trade has increased very much, being the best I have had in the twelve years I have sold photographic supplies.

The "cycle" trade to July was very good, but has since been cut up by several makers. The wheel I represent was not reduced in price until November, when the 1898 wheels came out, since which time trade has been fair for this season of the year. Prospects for 1898 are very bright, as the wheel I trade are very bright, and the wheel I represent has given perfect satisfaction in 1897.

THOMAS CHRISTIAN.

## NEVER DID SO WELL BEFORE.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
We have sold 1897 more goods, and shipped them over a wider territory than in any other year, and our sales for the spring of 1898 are greater than for any similar year in our long experience.

The outlook for the coming country is bright, and to unprecedentedly low prices for the staple, but the prospects in the grain, tobacco, and cattle sections are good. Notwithstanding all adverse circumstances, we expect and we intend to make 1898 a successful year.

STEPHEN PUTNEY & CO.,  
Boots and Shoes.

## NEARLY A RECORD-BREAKER.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
The outlook for our business for 1897 has been larger than in any previous year since 1893. We believe the prospects are at least indicative of as good as year for 1898. Yours truly,  
WOODWARD & SON,  
Lumber Dealers.

## MUCH BETTER BUSINESS THAN IN

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
For the first six months of 1897 we found no improvement in business over 1896, but from July the sales of each month have been in excess of the same time last year, and, as a whole, our business for 1897 is considerably ahead of 1896.

Our wholesale business with North and South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia, has been above the average this season, and especially in the holiday line of china, bric-a-brac, toys, etc., having sold a better class of these goods than usual.

Our business opened earlier this year than ever before for Christmas goods, and by the middle of September we had as many orders as we could handle, and early in October we were forced to put on an extra force and longer hours in order to keep up with the heavy demand for the holiday season.

As to business for 1898 in our line, we do not believe that any one knows what it will be, as there has been considerable advance in earthenware, china, etc., and with increased prices, which all buyers will be forced to make, we believe it will have a tendency to hold back orders for a time, at least, from the country merchants, but we believe that in a few months everything will straighten itself out, and give us a good business for 1898.

E. B. TAYLOR COMPANY,  
China and Glassware.

## JEFFERSON'S PATRONAGE IN-

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
Business at the Jefferson for the past year, and for the six months, has been steadily increasing over the corresponding months of 1896, and our prospects for the ensuing year are very much better than any year previous; in fact, the owners have found it necessary to put in a new building, which will be of material advantage to the patrons of the Jefferson.

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The glue trade for 1897 was not very

We have had a very gratifying increase of our business this year as compared with 1896.

The general business situation appears to us to be encouraging, and we confidently look for further improvement in all lines of business the coming year, as the underlying conditions all seem to be favorable and the people apparently more hopeful.

ALLISON & ADDISON, Fertilizers.

## MUCH BUILDING EXPECTED.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
Business in my line has been fair, considering the general depression of things. The condition of the lumber and mill-work trade at this time is dull, as it is always so at this time of the year. We look for a great deal of building being done in 1898. Respectfully,  
F. SITTERLING,  
Builder and Lumber Dealer.

## HEALTHY INCREASE SHOWN.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
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Our business has been better during the year than closing than before, and the present conditions are healthy. On account of the low prices of cotton, the growers will receive 100,000,000 less for their product, which will have not only a depressing effect upon our business, upon trade tributary to Richmond, but upon the whole country. The advanced price of wheat will about obliterate this amount, which goes principally to the West. Therefore, strict economy and earnest efforts are necessary to make the outlook bright for 1898.

RICHMOND AGRIC. IMP. CO.

## To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Since March we have been quite busy, and the business has been quiet, orders have been coming in quite briskly of late, and we carry into 1898 more work than ever before, and this should encourage us, with the general trend of improvement, to look for a busy and prosperous New Year.

RICHMOND LOCOMOTIVE AND MACHINE WORKS.

## ARE PERFECTLY SATISFIED.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
We are glad to be able to report our perfect satisfaction with the business of 1897. The outlook for 1898 appears bright and prosperous, and we see no reason that would lead us to believe that we will not have a prosperous year. While we do not expect any extraordinary improvement in the trade, there is a general and beneficial improvement, and we think 1898 will show better results than for some years past.

BALDWIN & BROWN,  
Hardware and Cutlery.

## LARGE SALES; GOOD COLLECTIONS.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
Taking it all together, we think our trade for the year just closing has been satisfactory. The volume of our business has been much larger than before, and owing to the low prices of goods, of course the amount of business in dollars and cents has not been very materially increased.

We have not suffered this, as in former years, from the continued decline in our stationary, as a rule. We think everything has reached "low-water mark," and the staple goods in our line are very firm. Indeed, some considerable advances have been made. We think the volume of business for 1898 will be very much larger than for 1897, and we believe that in a few months everything will straighten itself out, and give us a good business for 1898.

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## HOLD GOOD BUSINESS.

DEALERS GIVE CHEERING RE-

PORTS OF THE RETAIL TRADE.

## ALMOST UNIVERSALLY DID WELL.

The Past Year an Improvement

Over the Preceding One in Every

Line—The Dealers Very Hopeful as

to 1898.

The consensus of opinion among the retail dealers of Richmond is that business during 1897 was better than during 1896. Some of the city merchants tell the Dispatch that they saw no improvement, but these are in the great minority—a minority not so great, however, as that composed of those who found their trade not so good, or who do not expect 1898 to be better than 1897, from a business point of view.

Every branch of trade seems to have done better than in 1896. Decreases in sales are announced in some branches, but in the great majority it will be observed sales were better, in some cases very much so.

It is natural, then, that the new year should be entered upon with hopefulness. It is gratifying, as well, for a belief in better times makes times better.

It seems that they all expect great things during 1898, and their expecting it is partial assurance, at least, that they will not be disappointed. This is what some of the most prominent retailers of Richmond say of 1897, and predict for 1898:

Mr. Ike Cohen, of the Cohen Company, dry goods: The trade of our house has been more satisfactory the past year than in any of at least five previous years, and we are confident that the spirit of prosperity should meet with sudden check just yet. It is my opinion that we are entering a year in which peace and plenty will reign supreme; certainly for those who will keep their mouths open, so as to catch their share.

Mr. Meyer Sydel, dry goods: I think the country in general is in a more prosperous condition than it has been since the end of 1892. Still, we will hardly say that we are in a position to do as much business as we did last year. It is my opinion that we are entering a year in which peace and plenty will reign supreme; certainly for those who will keep their mouths open, so as to catch their share.

Mr. Charles J. Shuman, shoes: The aggregate of business for 1897 compares favorably with 1896, with no general improvement. The closing months of 1897, and the first of 1898, have been decided gains, and will reflect the aggregate on the close of the year.

Mr. C. F. Cross Shoe Company: We feel very much encouraged with the trade this fall, and look forward to a good spring business. The past year has been a very successful one, and we are confident that the spirit of prosperity should meet with sudden check just yet. It is my opinion that we are entering a year in which peace and plenty will reign supreme; certainly for those who will keep their mouths open, so as to catch their share.

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